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BRITISH



MUSEUM

H. Stafford

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Gal. II. Ver. XX.

I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless
I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in
me: and the Life which I now live in
the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the
Son of God, who loved me, and gave
himself for me.

FOR whatsoever things were written aforetime,
were written for our learning, that we through
Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might
have Hope, Rom. 15. 4. And so this
present Scripture which I have here chosen to
treat on, was, and doth stand recorded for our
Learning, yea, for our copying and writing after
it. But I doubt that few even of the Saints and
Servants of God in this Generation, will make so
good work of it, as the Original Copy is it self.
For as Paul did come somewhat behind and short
of Christ: so the best Saints that are now living
on the Earth, do also come short of Paul in Know-
ledge and Spiritual Graces, in constant and uni-
versal Obedience, and in Service for the Lord God.
However, it is the Duty of us all, to endeavour to
be as good as we can. And here being a very
fair and excellent Copy set before us, which I
do not say, we cannot, considering what Grace
and

and further Strength is given or offered us ; and to him that useth it well, or improves it, *He gives more Grace* ; but I doubt, we shall not write altogether so fair and excellent as it ; yet nevertheless it is convenient to write as well as we can, according to this compleat and perfect Exemplar here set before us. *I am crucified with Christ : Nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

I purpose, by the Divine Assistance, to handle these Words by way of Paraphrase or Exposition of the same ; and what profitable Doctrine, Instruction, or Exhortation doth arise from it by the way, so accordingly to make known the same unto ye.

I am crucified with Christ. The Word *Crucified* is taken from that kind of Punishment then used amongst the Ancient Romans, who did take Offenders, and such as they thought had done things worthy of Death, and nail them through their Hands and Feet unto a Cross of Wood, whereby at length they did die a lingring, but yet a certain Death. Every one knows that hath heard or read the Gospel, how that the Jews and Gentiles did with wicked Hands take Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Holy One, *who had done no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth :* and yet nevertheless they did put him to Death after that servile, shameful and painful manner, even the Death of the Cross. *And though they found no Cause of Death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain, Acts 13. 28.* And as the Thing was long before decreed of God : *For of a Truth, against thy Holy Child JESUS, whom thou hast anointed,*

anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the People of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done, Acts 4. 27, 28. So Jesus Christ himself had a Knowledge of it before he came to suffer it; for he doth in sundry places of the Gospel speak of it before it came to pass. The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Elders, and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third Day. And he said to them all, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow me, Luke 9. 22, 23.

Our Apostle in the Text did herein approve himself a true Follower and Disciple of Jesus Christ. For Paul by averring in Truth, That he was Crucified with Christ, hereby he did fulfil and comply with the purport, intention and meaning of this great Saying of Jesus Christ, *If any Man will come after me, let him take up his Cross daily and follow me.* And from hence we learn, That in the Christian Life, as ever we hope to be saved, and reap the Benefits thereof, in order to that, we must first deny our selves, and take up our Cross daily, that is, to afflict our Soul, Isa. 58. 3. and do something which is displeasing and painful to Flesh and Blood, the outward Corrupt and Carnal part of us, which is for Sloth and Ease. A Day should not pass over our Heads (for it is here said, *and take his Cross daily*) without using some Acts of self denial, or crucifying the Flesh, that is, by putting it to some pain or disgust, or by doing somewhat which that doth dislike or disrelish.

Provided always, That this Self-denial and crucifying the Flesh be observed only in keeping the Commandments of God, and in doing accord-

ing to the *Truth as it is in Jesus*. Be sure that thou have a Command from God, either as that lies written in this Book, or by what he makes known by the Dictates and Impulses of his Spirit in thy Conscience; which again is another thing from the meer Imaginations and Inventions of Men, or from the Suggestions of the evil one. If Care and Heed be not given herein, instead of *Well done good and faithful Servant*, thou mayest hear and receive from him at the last Day, *Who hath required this at your Hand?* Isa. 1. 12.

Hence may be conceived of those several Austerities of *Popish* Superstition; I mean only those for which they have no Warrant nor Ground for from the written and revealed Word of God; but rather therein they are like *Baals* Priests, who cut themselves after their manner with Knives and Lancets, till the Blood gushed out upon them, 1. Kings 18. 28. After the very same manner are the Whippings and Scourgings, with the several kinds of Penance which are used at this Day in *Pagan Christian Rome* by the Members of that false, erroneous, and corrupt Church. For they are nowhere taught to do so in the Book of the Lord, nor in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Produce your strong Reasons*, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth (if they can, as indeed they cannot) any Precept or Direction for it from the lively Oracles. *For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*, Lam. 3. 33. This is the result as to that matter, unless our Acts of Self-denial and Crucifying the Flesh be used only in coming after Christ, that is, in receiving of, and Obedience to his Doctrine; They are not now accepted by God, nor yet in the end will they be rewarded by him.

But

But on the other hand, in our coming to, or going after Christ, they do become matter of Duty, and ought to be used. So that the consequence is plain and necessary, that if any thing in our Religion, hath a shew of Pain or Inconvenience, Labour or Irksomness, Shame or Dishonour, or such like, it should thence be in no wise omitted or neglected, but it ought to be retained and done nevertheless. This Doctrine is true, and necessary to be learnt and practised. But yet many People are not aware of it; for much the greater part are for a smooth, easy, and Customary way, and for a beaten Road to Heaven. If you *behold their Devotions*, Acts 17. 23. and observe their manner, you will find that the way which each one proposes to go to Heaven, is by going constantly to Church, or by joyning themselves to such a Congregation or Community, and by observing the Fashions and Customs of the World, (which is to *be conformed to this World*, contrary to the Command of God in *Rom. 12. 2.* and not attending throughly unto what his Spirit saith, *For the Customs of the People are vain*, Jer. 10. 3.) or of such a set sort of People, and not by varying from the same at any time. But here it may be observed again, that in all this there is no *denying of themselves*, nor *taking up their Cross daily*.

There is no such denying of themselves, their own Worldly Profit or Interest, as to choose honest Poverty, or Meanness of Condition, before Riches or Plenty, when they may be *purchased with the Reward of Iniquity*, or by sinful and unrighteous means. God doth not try thousands even so far as this; for there are many People, especially in the lower Rank and Condition, who would with all their Hearts, put forth their Hand to Sin or

Iniquity, for to get the unrighteous Mammon, but it is not offered or tendr'd unto them. But here is the Tryal of a Man, that when he can have one or the other, great Riches following after Sin and Guilt in the Conscience, or but a little without Sin, than he will rather take up his Portion herein, than have the former. But most People do not deny themselves as *Moses* did, *Choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a season,* Heb. 11. 25: Who choose rather to lead a dull, melancholy, *Solitary*, Micah. 7. 14. *desitute*, Psal. 102. 7. Life in the Service of God, than to have those outward Comforts and Conveniencies which others have, who take up and content themselves with the formal and Customary Superficial outside Religion of the multitude.

Again, we ought to deny our selves in our Eating and Drinking, so as not to taste of the Pleasures of Fulness or Sensuality. *And let me not eat of their Dainties*, Psal. 141. 4. When we can and do subject our selves to Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Nakedness in the way of Duty, or as we are in the Course of our Ministration and Service of the Lord, this is denying our selves according to the Mind of Christ, which hath a Remcompence of Reward annex'd to it. For the more Self-denial of this kind is used here, the greater will be the Enjoyment hereafter. The more Labour hath been of this sort, so much the better and more pleasant will that *Rest* be which is to come. And so when we can subject our selves to Disgrace, or lessening of Reputation, this is taking up our Cross, for indeed it doth cross and thwart the Proud and Corrupt Nature in us. And so when we act *Revenge*, 2 Cor. 7. 11. upon our selves, be-
cause

cause we have sinned and transgressed against the Lord, this is also another taking up the Cross, for that imports Burthen and Pain; and so is acting any thing which is contrary or displeasing to our Nature.

Now to take up the Cross, or to be nailed on the Cross (both which kinds of Speech are used in Scripture) are but initial Acts: But to be crucified, that is the finishing Act, and signifies no less than the putting to Death by the Cross. And so when *Paul* here speaks, *I am crucified with Christ*, he hath a farther meaning than the bare taking up the Cross. But as the taking up of the Cross was a leading and Preparatory Step towards the being crucified, (for it was the constant manner of those that were to be crucified to take up the Cross first, and carry it themselves, which Christ was to have done, but they found *Simon the Cyrenian*, and him they compelled to carry it for him) so here the taking up the Cross in Christian Acts and Duties, is a leading and Preparatory Step towards the being crucified with Christ. *For ye are dead, and your Life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. 3. 3. And so *Paul* doth elsewhere say of himself, *I protest by your rejoycing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily*, 1 Cor. 15. 31. Now we know, there is a difference between dying and being dead. And so it should be with us, we should be daily and continually dying unto Sin, until we are dead unto Sin. And to be dead unto Sin, is to be crucified with Christ. In very deed, this is one of the highest degrees of all the Attainments in Christianity. It is the highest flight and soaring up aloft towards the Regions of Bliss, which can possibly be whilst we are here on this Earth. *But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their Strength: they shall*

mount up with Wings as Eagles. Isa. 40. 31. These *Wings* may be supposed to be Obedience and Knowledge, by which the Soul doth bear and lift up it self towards Heaven. Now Sin doth again clip these Wings, and hinder the flight upwards: so that it must be kept short, yea, and quite destroyed or rooted out, if we would make sure work for Heaven.

As Crucifixion doth let out the Blood wherein the Life consists; so the being *crucified with Christ*, doth let out the old corrupt and sinful Nature, yea, the Taste and Scent of it by degrees goes off also. *Hating even the Garment spotted by the Flesh*, Jude 23. and renouncing even the things which favour thereof, for such a State may be attained unto, and the Scripture speaks of it in sundry places. *Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his Lees, and hath not been emptied from Vessel to Vessel, neither hath he gone into Captivity: therefore his Taste remained in him, and his Scent is not changed*, Jer. 48. 11. Here the Holy Ghost doth complain, that the *Taste* should remain which should have been gone and vanished. As also it doth give Instruction that the *Scent* should be changed, that is, from Evil unto Goodness, from Sin unto Duty, from Transgression unto Obedience, and from the Power of Satan unto God. By Crucifixion there is a change wrought from Life to Death, and from Death unto Life again in the future State and Resurrection: So by being *crucified with Christ* there is a change or Renewal wrought in the inward Man, from Sloth, Drowsiness, yea, and the Death of Sin unto the Life of Grace. We should be dead unto Sin, and dead as to the World, but alive unto God. Arise up and be doing in his Service.

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A bare Negative Innocence, or only a *ceasing from Sin*, is not sufficient, but there should be Action and Motion in good things and matters of Duty. *Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power*, Psal. 110. 3. And so God's People are a stirring and active People; who are *willing* also in this *Day* of his Grace and Forbearance. *But the People that do know their God, shall be strong and do exploits*, Dan. 11. 32. And whereas it is here said in the same Verse, *such as do wickedly against the Covenant, shall be corrupt by Flatteries*. So there may be observed the same failure both in the wicked & Godly of these Days. For like as is the Condition of the damned, ever dying and never dead; so there being some Principles of Goodness in the worst of Men, they are ever returning to the Lord, but never actually turned. They are, or at least pretend, to be dying unto Sin, but they are not actually dead unto it. They are full of good Purposes and Resolutions, but they prove abortive and do not come forth into like effect. So it is of others, Many who *have a Name that thou livest and art dead*, Rev. 3. 1. And so they who have a *Name* of being Religious, Godly, and such like, they think and speak well, but herein they are found wanting, they do not act and lay themselves out for God: A *ceasing from Evil* is but one half of our Duty, and so it is but one half way to Heaven: And to go half way only, it is almost the same as if you did not set out at all; for it will not bring you to the Journey's end, and there is but so much Trouble and Loss to no purpose to go that half way. But there must be also a *doing well* in as many several Acts and Instances of Good as those are of Sin or Evil, which we are obliged to *cease* from. Accordingly the Apostle *Paul* in the Text, hath hit upon this very nature, order and requisite of things. For
he

he knew that it was not sufficient to be dead unto Sin, or dead unto the World, or to be crucified with Christ, but immediately he thereupon adds and subjoyns, *Nevertheless I live.*

This Particle, *Nevertheless*, is as the catching up of ones self after a Fall, or as a correcting ones self after a Slip of the Tongue. And it is as much as, if Paul should have said, To be crucified or dead, is to become a meer lump or useless thing. And what profit or good is in that? But we should be living Servants of the living God. It is observable how Christ proves the Resurrection, because of the Reason annex'd, and particularly that last of all in *Luke 20. 37, 38.* Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him, which indeed is true. For as all Souls are his; and though to us they seem to dye and perish, when they go out of the Body, which thereupon becomes a Carcase and dead Lump, yet in the very same Hour they do live unto God. The Spirit returns to God who gave it. And all the Spirits of all Men and Women of all Generations and Countreys that were ever on this Earth, do live unto God. Surely then it is meet and reasonable, that a living God should be glorified and served by living Creatures; according to what his Word saith, *That no Man should live unto himself, but unto God who hath created him.* This very thing makes to discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For the wicked and they that do not serve God, they do live unto themselves, as to enjoy Pleasure. But she that liveth in Pleasure, is dead while she liveth,

1 Tim.

1 Tim. 5. 6. or to get Riches and Gain, or for a Livelihood. Or they do short out their Days in Sloth and Idleness rather than live. All this and the like, is not to live unto God, who hath created them, for they do not *frame their doings to turn unto God*. But they are, as it were, without God in the World. *Thou hast said in thine Heart, I am, and none else besides me*, Isa. 47. 10. They are for being their own Men, and for doing as they list, and what they will themselves. The alone Performance of Acts of outward Worship, is no more serving of God, than the bare calling such an one Master, will render him a Servant without doing Work or Business for him. But the Righteous, and they that serve God, do live unto God. What Life he affords or lends unto them, they set it all aside for his Service. They count themselves not worthy any longer to live, than they can do things for God. *Whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, they do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. And it is all brought in Subordination and Tendency to his Service. As the Soul actuates the Body, so Obedience, and Faith, and Grace do actuate their Souls, and lead them up another Step higher, to live as much above the Common lives of Men, as the Rational Life is above the Life of Sense: so much is the Life of Faith above and beyond the Life of Reason. And therefore to shew that he did live the Life of Grace, and of Faith, Paul doth express himself further on this wise, *Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God*.

God breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul, Gen. 2. 7. So that Good which any one doth, it is not so much the Man

Man who doth the same, but God and Christ which dwelleth in him; which is also confirmed by this saying of Paul in the Text, *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* For as it goes to our first Creation, that we are partakers of, or at least we do derive our Being from the God-head himself: so in the second Creation, whereby we are made *Partakers of his Holiness*, God doth first communicate it forth, whereby we do receive it. At the end of things God will so display and manifest himself, that *God may be All in All*, that whatever of Being, Substance, Goodness, was in any thing that is or can be named, it all comes and is derived from him. He first containeth all things in himself, and so he gives forth to whatever comes into Being, thereby shewing and manifesting himself to be the alone Creatour of all things. So it is as to Being it self; and much more it is so as to Goodness, which is an Essential Property of Being.

Now it may be from hence understood, that as the Soul doth actuate the Body; so Christ doth sanctifie, yea, and actuate the Body, Soul and Spirit of Believers. *As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them,* 2 Cor. 6. 16. *God is in you of a Truth,* 1 Cor. 14. 25. *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,* Mat. 10. 20. And to the same purpose are those several Forms of Speech, of Christ being in you, and dwelling in you. For as in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily. *For it pleased the Father that in him should all Fulness dwell,* Col. 1. 19. *And of his Fulness have we all received, and Grace for Grace,* John 1. 16. So he is sufficient to actuate the Souls of all Believers, if they were ten thousand times more in number than now they are. Like as the Ocean or Sea doth send forth her Exhalations

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tions up into the Clouds, which are said to draw and suck them up in nature of a Sponge, and they send it forth again in Rain to water and moisten the whole Earth: so in Christ is contained an Ocean or gathering together of all Grace and Goodness, (*And the gathering together of the Waters called be Seas*, Gen. 1. 10. *And unto him (Shiloh, that is Christ) shall the gathering of the People be*, Gen. 49. 10) abundant and more then sufficient to fill and replenish the Hearts of all Believers throughout the whole Earth; and accordingly the Lord Jesus doth manifest himself unto them, otherwise than he doth unto the World.

It is not sufficient or availeable to *make mention of the God of Israel, or to stay themselves upon the God of Israel*, when it is *not in Truth, nor in Righteousness*, Isa. 48. 1, 2. and so as to Jesus Christ, to *call him, Lord, Lord*, but to live the Life of God and of Christ, to have an Interest and Propriety in them, to have God and Christ dwelling in our Hearts and Souls. As there is a large and wide difference between talking of an Estate and having it: so it is altogether as far off between talking only of God and Christ, and having them. *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 John 4. 16. And so God is Goodness, God is Truth; and therefore it may in like manner be reasoned and surely inferred, he that follows after Goodness, and speaks nothing but the Truth, God dwells in him, and he in God. And he that hath the Spirit of Christ, and who hath *crucified the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts*, and hath the Fruits of the Spirit of Christ, *as Love, Joy, Peace, long-suffering, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*, Gal. 5. 22, 23, and such inward Qualifications and Dispositions of Soul, *against which there is no Law* either in the Old

Christ Old or New Testament, He is in Christ and Christ in him. It is not so much the Man that lives but Christ lives in him. The same Spirit and Mind is in him which was in Christ Jesus, *Who went about doing God*, Acts 10. 31. And to perform the Will of his Heavenly Father, and to *finish his Work*.

Christ Jesus came down from Heaven; so that he knew what was transacted in Heaven whilst he was there, and also what is revealed unto us in the Scriptures. But *as we have heard, so shall we see*. And even now according as we more abound and grow in the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: So accordingly and proportionably we know and think more of God and of heavenly things. *And I think also that I have the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 7. 40. The way to know the Mind of God, is to become Holy and Obedient unto his Word and Commandment. *What Man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose*, Psal. 25. 12. For so our selves have experimentally found, that as we have walked before him in *Righteousness and Holiness*, in Stillness, and Retirement, and Freedom from the Cares of this Life, God did then more afford the Communications and Influences of himself unto us. And again, as we have committed and fell in to Sin, we have thereupon became *Foolish and Ignorant*: *I was as a Beast before thee*, Psal. 73. 22. Sin doth cast a Cloud over the Understanding, which hinders and intercepts the Light and Influences of the Holy one. But unto you that fear my Name, shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his Wings, Mal. 4. 2. God knows all things, and Christ knows all things, John 21. 17. And they do reveal and make known unto the Children of Men, such things as pertain to his Kingdom, and

and their own Salvation, according as they obey and please him.

The reasonable Soul is by nature desirous to know of the things of Futurity, how or after what manner it shall be with her after she is gone off from this Earth. As to this she hath *great Thought and searching of Heart*. Now as Christ had a foreknowledge of what things he should suffer; how that he should go up to *Jerusalem*, and be delivered into the Hands of Men, and to *suffer these things, and to enter into his Glory*: so in like manner, as Christ doth more or less live in us, we know in general Terms that it will be well or evil with us in the future State.

It is a great and desirable thing to have Christ living in us. Not to talk of or pretend to it only, but to have it so in deed and in truth. As it was said concerning himself, that one of the old Prophets was risen again, that is, the same Spirit was in him which was in one of the Old Prophets. So to have the same, or *the residue of the Spirit*, Mal. 2. 15. which was in Christ, to be residing in us also, is a very great and good thing.

Christ Jesus said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an Offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men*, Mat. 16. 23. And so I have often thought, that it would be a fair and good degree towards Perfection, not to savour at all the things of Men, or the things of the World. As for instance, not to think that Rich, or Beautiful, or good Natured People do sin more excusably than others. But that all People whatsoever, from the highest to the lowest, who sin, do thereupon become guilty, and are worthy of Punishment. *Thou shalt not wrest Judgment, thou shalt not respect Persons, neither take a Gift*

a Gift: For a Gift doth blind the Eyes of the Wise, and pervert the Words of the Righteous, Deut. 16. 19. So the having received Kindnesses or Benefits from another (as there is some sence of Gratitude almost in in all People) makes us to become partial Judges; to justifie or mitigate such a thing in our Benefactors, which would be real Sin or Evil in another: This and the like is to savour the things of Men: But we have not so learned Christ. For as it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fullness dwell: So when He became Man, and took upon him our Nature, He knew that a *Man's Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, Luke 12. 15.* and that the Necessaries thereof were to be had, by doing only that Thing which is *Lawful and Right.* See *Ezek. 18. 27.* That he rejected whatever was more, as of Evil. For when they would have made Christ a King, he refused it, his Kingdom being not of this World. And so when the Devil offered to give unto him all the Kingdoms of this World, and the Glory of them, if he would fall down and worship him. Then saith Jesus unto him, *Get thee hence Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Matt. 4. 8, 9, 10.* And so admitting the Necessaries of Life were not to be had by doing only the Thing that is lawful and right, according to the Commandment and requiring of our God, (as indeed they are to be had by so doing) yet here is *the Faith and Patience of the Saints,* That we would starve and perish rather than commit Sin, or Evil, or put forth our Hand to Iniquity to get a Livelihood. God is pleased to try some of his Saints and Servants even thus far, even to reduce them to their last Extremity and Plunges, to prove them yet exceedingly

ceedingly, and whether they will, notwithstanding all that, keep themselves innocent and whole and stedfast in his Covenant. *Thou feedest them with the Bread of Tears, and givest them Tears to drink in great measure, Psal. 80. 5.* These are hard and sore Trials, in which if the Servants of God shall approve themselves, they shall also receive a full and great Reward.

If we could say in deed and in truth, *Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;* we should live another and much better kind of Life, even more High and Spiritual than the best of Christians do in this our Generation and Countrey. For then all Self-Love, and Covetousness, and Carnal ends, & mixtures of wordliness, would be utterly banished from among us, and we should live utterly separated from the things of Sence. And then our Zeal for God, and how to approve our selves unto him, would take up all our Care and Concern. Yea, then we should arrive at further Heights and Perfections, even such as are spoken of and intimated forth in the Pure and Holy Word of God.

Howbeit, we speak Wisdom among them that are Perfect, 1 Cor. 2. 6. And so the Scripture in sundry places and in divers manners doth speak of those higher degrees of Perfection and Eminency in Christianity, which are attained and attainable in this Life. And it would be a good rule for us, as we meet with them in our reading, or as we hear them preached unto us, thereupon immediately to ask our Souls, Doth this belong to me? Or am I such an one as is there spoken of? Doth *this strong Meat* belong to me that am of full Age, even to me, who by reason of use have my Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil? Heb. 5. 14. For they that

have used the Office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great Bolaness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 3. 13. And so in like manner it may be reasoned, They who have used less Gifts or Measures of Grace well, have purchased to themselves a good degree, and they have made Proficiency and Advancement further in the Christian Life. Those who have learned well in some of the lower Forms of Christ's School, shall at length be placed and advanced up higher. Somewhat pursuant to this are those Words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *When thou art bidden of any Man to a Wedding, go and sit down in the lowest Room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have Worship in the Presence of them that sit at meat with thee,* Luke 14. 8, 10. Besides the Lesson of Humility which is here taught us, which is the way to Honour and Exaltation. This Word of Instruction doth also hence arise, that we should in no wise content our selves with the lower Degrees and Attainments of Christianity, but still press further and aim higher, although this is to be done only by beginning at the lowermost Steps at first. For as there is no coming to the top of a Ladder set up without first treading on the lower Rounds: even so it is as to what Jacob saw in his Dream, *And behold a Ladder set up on the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven: and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending on it,* Gen. 28. 12. There is no going to Heaven per saltum, as the Phrase among the Latines is, that is to say, to leap or jump up into it at once. But it must be by degrees, and by a Preparation and going forwards unto it. And we must not at first despise the Day of small things, as long as there is

an Endeavour after greater. We commonly say, that leisurely and gradual Work is the surest Work. And indeed if the Foundation be laid well, although we go on slowly, yet if we be sure to continue going on, soft and fair will go far. *He that believeth shall not make haste, Isa. 28. 16.* In those slow motions they commonly take the more time, and make the most of time, that is, they are idle or stand still as little as possible, and no more than what is necessary. Even so we should use the very same Wisdom, Forecast and Contrivance in doing the Work of God, and finishing what he hath sent us on Earth for to do, that no Day or Portion of our time should slip away without doing somewhat towards it. It is reported of *Bradford* the Martyr, that there was not an Hour in which he did not some good or other. And so one of the Ancient Heathen Philosophers did complain with Indignation, that *he had lost a Day.* But who of the Christians of our Time, or in what Congregation or Denomination is he to be found, who is so observant of his Time to so good ends and purposes? Who doth *wait on God all the Day?* *Psal. 25. 5.* and is *in the fear of the Lord all the day long?* *Prov. 23. 17.* And as others do devise Iniquity on their Bed, so when he awakes he is still with thee, and during that little space of Time between that and his actual rising up, he doth forecast which way he shall most glorify God, and do most good to mankind throughout the following Day.

And truly the more we do not live unto our selves, *but Christ liveth in us*, as it is in the Words of our Text, we shall be so much the more conformed and like unto him, *who went about doing good.* Whose Meat and Drink it was to do the Will of his Heavenly Father, and to finish his

Work. We never read or hear that he spent time
 in Recreations or Pleasures of Life. What do I
 say that Christ did spend no time in Recreations
 or Pleasures. All his time was in Recreation, *I*
delight to do thy Will, O my God, Psal. 40. 8. But
 this was another kind of Recreation and Pleasure
 then what the People of the World take. And
 so, whose *delight is in the Law of the Lord*, Psal. 1. 2.
 there is no need to such of any worldly Recreations
 or Pleasures. But the Joy and Satisfaction of their
 Soul is, in doing the Will of God, and in finishing
 his Work. *The Sun rejoiceth as a strong Man to*
run a Race, Psal. 19. 5. So there is sensibly Peace
 and Rest, yea, and rejoicing of Spirit, in an-
 swering and complying with those Ends for which
 God created us. *Now the God of Hope fill you with*
all Joy and Peace in believing, Rom. 15. 13. So it is
 sensible upon the Hearts of his Servants and People
 (I have many times felt and observed it so within
 my self) that we have this *Joy and Peace* as long as
 we are doing the Will of God. Which again he
 denies and witholds from us, as we neglect and o-
 mit the doing of his Will; so that hereby we may
 somewhat know, whether we are doing the Will
 of God or not, according as we have *Joy and Peace*
 within us or not. The Conscience, as long as it is
 conformable unto, and guided by the written
 Word as it's Rule, is the best Direction to each one,
 and shews what is the Mind and Will of the Lord.
 This is the *Work of the Law written in our Hearts*;
 so that, take the Conscience, as guided by God's
 Statute Book the Bible; and then the Dictates
 thereof are of the same Authority, and ought all
 one to be obeyed as if one heard outwardly the
 Voice of God himself from out of Heaven; Or as
 if God spake to us in as open a manner Face to
 Face

Face as he did to *Moses*, or to any of the Prophets. It was thus that *Moses* and the Prophets, and the Holy Men and Women of old time did obey and approve themselves unto God.

So also *Christ* glorified not himself; but though he were a Son, yet learned he Obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made Perfect, he became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him, Heb. 5. 5, 8, 9. Now we know that from a Son that servility and Labour is not due as from a Servant; for a Son comes somewhat nearer to the Terms of Equality than the other. However, he approves himself a good Son indeed, who will of his own accord work and labour for his Father, his Duty being Honour and Reverence. And when the Holy Ghost maketh use of such Comparisons and Illustrations, thereby he shews forth, that such Obedience is more excellent and acceptable and well pleasing unto the Lord.

He therefore most liveth the Life of *Christ*, and *Christ* liveth in him, who doth as *Christ* did. For even hereunto were ye called: because *Christ* also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we should follow his Steps. Who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22. Who was Holy, Harmless, Undeiled, and separated from Sinners. And so when we read in the Gospel of the Gentleness, and Meekness, and Long-suffering of *Jesus Christ*, we should see to it, and endeavour that all these be ingrafted into us also. And so it should be of all the things which *Jesus* did and said, as far as we are capable to receive and do the like; we should accordingly receive and do them. For this is to live the Life of *Christ*; or rather, it is not we but *Christ* liveth in us, and the Life which we live is by the Faith of the Son of God.

But

But wherefore is it said? By the Faith of the Son of God. Faith doth point and relate unto an unseen Object. Saith the Writer of this our Text, *That he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once. After that he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles. And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time, 1 Cor. 15. 5, 6, 7, 8.* And so he was seen of the Jews of that Generation and Countrey all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them. But ever since his removal from the Earth, and his now sitting on the Right Hand of God, the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is an unseen Object. For there is no other seeing of him now whilst we are in the Flesh, but by the Eye of Faith, by which we may even now, as Stephen did, *look up stedfastly into Heaven, and see the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the Right Hand of God, Acts 7. 55.* So that it is here most properly and fitly expressed. *The Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.*

Sirs, let me tell ye, that it is a great thing to live by Faith, or to live the Life of Faith. *The just shall live by his Faith, Hab. 2. 4.* which is a very observable Scripture, in that it is thrice quoted by the Apostle Paul, and it is written for our Learning and Admonition upon whom the ends of the World are come. But most People, especially those of the common and poorer sort, are transformed and become after the manner of Beasts; for they live by Sense, and take thought chiefly for *what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed.* But few do live according to the true Rules and Dictates of Reason, and yet fewer, yea, the fewest of all, do live by Faith. To live by Faith is the highest Step and furthest Advancement of all; for

for it would set us as much beyond and above the common level of mankind, as Men are above and beyond Beasts. The more we live by Faith, the more we live according to the Mind of Christ, and the better Christians we are. *Now Faith is the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11. 1.* And it doth wean from the Milk, and draw from the Breasts, Isa. 28. 9. abstracting utterly from all Considerations arising from the things of this World and of this present Life: whereby we may be taught Knowledge, and be made to understand Doctrine. So that he is not principally guided and influenced by the things of this World, who doth in truth live by the Faith of the Son of God.

And whereas it is further added in the Text, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him, John 4. 9. Greater Love hath no Man, than that a Man should die for his Friend; but God commended his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us. It is a real Token and Evidence of his Love to mankind, that he should for a Time empty and strip himself of that Glory which he had with his Father before the World began, and become manifested in the Flesh, and take upon him the likeness of Men, Sin only excepted. And then die the painful and shameful Death of the Cross for us. *In his Love, and in his Pity he redeemed them, Isa. 63. 9.* But so very much is said hereof in the words of *Isaiah*, particularly in the 53 Chapter, and in all the four Evangelists, and in the Writings of the Apostles, that I had rather refer ye to the reading of them, and to supply it out of your own Meditation, then if I should here utter ten thousand Words concerning this copious and pleasant Subject, *How that Christ loved us, and gave himself for us.* Be-

Believe, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, 1 John 4. 11. So the very same reasoning and Inference here holds good and true, If Christ loved us, and gave himself for us; then we ought reciprocally to love him, and give up our selves unto him. What it is to love Christ, himself hath told us, *If a Man love me, he will keep my Commandments.* And to give up our selves unto Christ, is to follow him, the Lamb, whithersoever he goes; although it be to the Slaughter, and Death it self. It is to be in Covenant with Christ, and we are for our parts to fulfil and do the Terms of the Covenant which he doth require of us. There is a kind of Speech, of giving up ones self to be a Bond-Slave. But it is in no wise so, when one gives up himself to be the Servant of Christ. *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,* John 8. 36.

Now to come towards the Conclusion of this whole Discourse and Sermon. The use and Application whereof I would recommend to such, who shall hear or read these things, is to this following effect, namely, that ye should in no wise content, or rather deceive your selves, as to only say in such a form of Words, *I am crucified with Christ; Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.* But see well to it, that it be so with ye indeed and in truth. As the Scripture saith, *Not the Hearers of the Law, but the Doers thereof shall be justified before God.* So it is not the Talkers, or Pretenders, or Boasters of Christianity shall be saved, but only the real Practitioners thereof. There are thousands in the visible Church, who like the Scribes and Pharisees in *Mat. 23. 3.* say and do not; who talk of the highest degrees and attainments in Christianity, but how to perform the same they find not. But amidst all Appearance and Deceit, *Nevertheless, the Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* And let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts in that Day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him, *Mal. 3. 17.* Who have this Character, and Seal, and Testimony in the mean while, that they are crucified with Christ, nevertheless they live, yet not they, but Christ liveth in them; and the Life which they now live in the Flesh, they live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved them, and gave himself for them.

Written by *Richard Stafford*, formerly of *Magdalen Hall in Oxford.* And printed in the Year 1702

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